Caste and Gender in a Mumbai Resettlement Site

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This paper foregrounds specific experiences of urban dalit women affected by displacement, thereby underpinning the significance of caste, religion, identity and gender. Based on socio-anthropological research methods and extensive fieldwork carried out at a resettlement site in Mumbai it argues that "social factors" continue to play a significant role in cities. They play a pivotal role in experiences and negotiations of the traumatic processes of displacement and resettlement, often involving uprooting, erasure of memory, loss of livelihoods and kinship, and coming to terms with a compromised and limited social life. While this may be true of all affected populations equally, nevertheless, it is significant to recover nuanced voices of these experiences from the caste and gender perspective to understand the emerging complex spaces on the city's periphery and new forms of urban exclusion. A large number of women who are not networked to non-governmental organisations and/or civic authorities end up becoming the most marginalised and excluded category, deprived of rights and citizenry.

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In the extremely significant thesis of "global cities", Sassen (1991) and Harvey (1991) have illustrated how cities have become important sites for organising the world economy. Cities have become dominant forces instrumental in altering the geography of production and finance (Naerssen 2001). In the era of globalisation, they offer a complex understanding of evolving spaces, urban governance, infrastructure, restructuring, gentrification, displacement and new ways of interactions between several state and civic actors. Megacities in recent periods have been "emerging objects of theory, debate and policy interventions" (Rao 2010: 529). Roy (2009) notes the paradoxical nature of Indian cities: on one side they have engaged new forms of grass-roots citizenship, social mobilisations and so on, while on the other, contemporary cities are marked by several deep inequalities, mass displacement, and most importantly "entrenchment of segregation and separations that territorialise urban identities in enclave geographies".

Regardless of their oppressive and exploitative existence, cities continue to play a vital role in altering the social milieu of any given society. Mumbai is one of such promising cities for both capital and labour, undergoing dynamic and polygonal changes. In a bid to transform it into a "world class" city for capitalist projects, McKinsey, a leading international consultancy had two important recommendations. They entailed "relaxation of land acquisition and control over labour" (Banerjee-Guha 2009: 101). McKinsey also recommended six areas that needed improvement – housing, economic growth, transportation, governance, the structure related to water, sanitation, health facilities and pollution-reducing strategies (Katakam 2005). In order to implement these recommendations, state authorities commenced with the demolition of shanties, making some 3,00,000 people homeless (Roy 2009: 174). This avalanche of demolition drives was shamelessly described as the "Indian tsunami" (ibid: 174).

Banerjee-Guha (2009) underscores this approach of the state as anti-poor. Referring to this nexus of state government agencies, such as the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), and international consultancies, such as McKinsey, as "active collaborators", Banerjee-Guha outlines the nature of policies devised by the state to benefit capital. She elucidates the character of such a process as:

> representing a gradual fragmentation of territories, economic decline, displacement of a large majority, increasing socio-spatial inequality and simultaneous emergence of new/modern activities in specific locales, implying an aggravation of 'spaces of differences' (ibid: 96).

Like Rao (2009), who highlights how megacities have been emerging objects of theory, debate and policy interventions, geographer Neil Smith (1982) identified a lag in theoretical

development to capture the "process of redevelopment and gentrification as the 'leading edge of larger processes of uneven development' that are embedded in structures of capitalist mode of production".

Most of these critical frameworks have employed a class perspective focusing on macro-level capitalist processes and its power to alter the city, its landscape and impact on the city's poor in order to understand neo-liberal cities. Though it is a critical approach, it is seriously limited because displaced populations have a "social life", be it in the slums or at resettlement sites. Besides, in India, displaced populations disproportionately belong to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (referred to here as Buddhists/dalits[1]) and remain the worst victims of such development processes (Ganguly Thukral 1996: 1500). Therefore, it may be argued, that in such circumstances, a class perspective may not offer a fine-grain analysis and insights to understand specificities of experiences borne by dalit and tribal oustees displaced and resettled in mixed neighbourhoods.

A decade ago, Ganguly Thukral (1996) identified a similar gap and underlined the necessity to understand the gender dimension of development, displacement and resettlement. She demonstrated the complexities of gender and its impact on oustees as layered and multidimensional. Nonetheless, she also warned that the understanding of gender as a single and "homogeneous category" would certainly be erroneous hinting at understanding it rather from an intersectional perspective (ibid: 1500). It is in this context, that I attempt to unravel and examine "involuntary resettlement" (Cernea 1996: 1516) in Mumbai from a caste and gender perspective.

Cernea (ibid: 1516) defines the "involuntary resettlement" process as consisting of two distinct yet closely linked components. The first component of the process entails "displacement of people" and the second component is "the reconstruction of their livelihood". He also clarifies that in the case of India, social scientists have further divided the post-displacement phase into two, resettlement and rehabilitation. Rehabilitation is a much broader concept comprising assistance, rebuilding and restoration of displaced people's income, livelihood and so on. Yet, resettlement as a process can be limiting, meaning displacing and relocating the displaced without rehabilitation/proper restoration of income/livelihood.

Cernea (1996) also elaborated the sociological dimensions of such processes as far broader and complicated. He warns that such "forced population displacement always creates a social crisis and sometimes a political crisis as well" (ibid: 1516). Oddly, several studies on displacement in Mumbai discuss the overall impact but leave out social identities and the emerging complex social milieu at the resettlement sites. This is not to suggest that these studies have been uncritical in foregrounding the general impact on the displaced population, particularly in understanding the negative consequences of displacement, its economic impact, the environmental impact, loss of income/livelihoods, kinship, social disarticulation and so on. However, these studies have excluded narratives from the caste, religion and gender perspectives. One of the exceptions to this was the study undertaken by Contractor et al (2006) dealing with specific issues of gender in an involuntary resettlement site of Mumbai, from the human rights perspective. Although this study extensively deals with the gender question, particularly that of Muslim women and their experience of a resettlement site, it leaves out the question of caste and other intersections. In particular, what has been largely "missing" in most of these studies are nuanced perspectives of caste and gender, particularly from the dalit women's perspective as those who have so far been "silenced" and "invisible" victims in the process of urban development, displacement and resettlement.

This paper further elaborates the research methodology and geographical details of the resettlement site in Mumbai. The living conditions and common struggles of the residents unravel specific caste and gender experiences of living in a mixed neighbourhood as "painful", "risky" and "compromised", and concludes with the learning experiences of urban dalit women, and their interface with leading non-governmental organisations (NGOs) contracted by state authorities to assist in the process of resettlement.

Methodology

This paper is based on extensive fieldwork[2] conducted at Lallubhai Compound, a resettlement site in Mankhurd, Mumbai. Preliminary fieldwork was carried out between August 2003 and August 2005. Another round of visits followed from September 2006 through August 2007, and from September 2012 through November 2012. Primary data was collected by the use of socio-anthropological methods, such as field observation, in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and focused group discussions (FGDs). Forty in-depth interviews with key informants were conducted at their respective homes, allowing for the greater privacy and anonymity critical to voice experiences of caste-based discrimination. Since the focus of the study was to examine specific experiences of dalit women, I chose to interview women across different buildings where dalit residents are either in a majority or minority. Key informants belonged to different castes and communities. Further, 14 FGDs were conducted in the buildings with women and girls where a majority of residents were dalits. All the research participants were willing to participate, they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in order to protect their identity, and hence the names of the participants mentioned in this paper have been changed.

Geographical Location and Profile

Lallubhai Compound, also known as Lallubhai Complex, is located in the midst of the sprawling slums of Mankhurd. This massive resettlement site holds approximately 72 five-storied buildings, divided into three sectors, namely, A, B and C. The host communities[3] around this resettlement site identify themselves as dalit and Muslim communities, and predominantly belong to low-income families. Lallubhai Compound is surrounded by the slums of Sathe Nagar, Maharashtra Nagar, Zakir Hussain Nagar, Shivaji Nagar, and other nearby low- and middle-income colonies such as the Deonar Municipal colony, Gautam Nagar, Tata Nagar and the Deonar Fire Brigade colony.

Zakir Hussain Nagar and Sathe Nagar are largely dominated by two groups namely, Muslims and the Maang/Matang (an untouchable caste). This resettlement site itself is a motley mix of socio-economic groups, but a large number are dalits, the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Muslims who have migrated from different regions of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh.[4]

Opposite Sathe Nagar is also a precarious "transit camp" located next to an overflowing and wide sewer near the express highway recently named as "Jeejabai Bhosle Marg". Approximately 1,000 makeshift tenements were constructed by the Mumbai Urban Transport Project (MUTP) to accommodate project-affected families. These families were promised that they would be rehoused in Lallubhai Compound, but more than 50% of those residing since 2005 were not given a tenement there under the pretext of lack of proper documentation. They are awaiting resettlement in Lallubhai Compound, which they think is better than living in the transit camp.[5]

In May 2005, most of the buildings in Lallubhai Compound were occupied by displaced families who previously lived in different parts of Mumbai, such as Andheri, Bhandup, Powai, Kurla, Byculla, Matunga, Dharavi, Sion, Sewri and Chembur. The MUTP states that the total cost of the project entailing urgent improvement of physical infrastructure in rail and road transportation was $945 million (World Bank 2013). Out of this, $542 million was approved by the World Bank in 2002. The MUTP identified nearly 20,000 households that would face compulsory displacement. The site has several buildings that are vacant and it is known to be one of the largest resettlement sites in Mumbai with a capacity to hold more than 35,000 project-affected persons (Gupte 2009).[6]

Unsettling Households and Communities

In several studies conducted on resettlement sites in Mumbai by research institutions and academicians, activists have pointed out serious flaws in the implementation of the process of resettlement and rehabilitation. A significant study undertaken by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) on behalf of the MMRDA on the resettlement of 9,000 project-affected persons (PAP) under the MUTP underscored this entire process as "recycling of poverty" (MMRDA 2008). Another team of architects, and human rights advocates who visited Lallubhai Compound deemed it a "vertical slum" and unfit for decent living[7] (DNA 2011).

The residents, regardless of their caste, class, religion, gender or language, unanimously echoed their dissatisfaction and discontent about their relocation, living conditions and social life amidst the diverse population. The common reasons for their discontent were the pathetic living conditions marked by lack of access to civic amenities, public transportation, access to a common place of worship and a heightened sense of insecurity and lack of belongingness in the new neighbourhood as compared to their earlier habitat. In addition, access to basic amenities, including water and transportation, has been a chronic issue. Though access to public transportation, namely bus services, has improved considerably since the initial phase of resettlement, the residents continue to struggle. On the positive side, residents were satisfied about their entitlement, which they said was the "only positive/plus point" of this relocation, that they have a pucca house which they legally own.

Commuting Made Difficult

There is no direct approach road to this resettlement site. In spite of it being very close to the suburban railway station of Mankhurd, it lacks public transportation to and fro. The residents continue to cross the *patri* (railway tracks) in order to reach the station. This route, referred to as the "short cut", is highly risky and liable to punishment. Despite several minor and major accidents reported while crossing the railway tracks here, the residents continue to do so because it is convenient and saves time and money in reaching the railway station. However, it is the women and schoolgoing children who are compelled to take the other longer and comparatively expensive routes in order to commute to their school or workplace. A "share" auto-rickshaw costs between Rs 5 and Rs 10 for a single journey. This grave inconvenience (which residents believe could be sorted out by the construction of a foot overbridge) has brought in unnecessary expenses and affected the women's mobility severely.

This is also cited as a major reason for loss of livelihood for many, particularly the women. To date, this site does not have a pedestrian bridge that connects it to Mankhurd station directly. In 2007, the Brihan Mumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) introduced bus services providing a much needed relief to residents. The BEST operates a couple of bus routes to SRA colony, Mankhurd. These buses halt inside the site, near the Lallubhai Compound police chowkey. The buses are always overcrowded and women experience much inconvenience due to this.

Women participants in the FGDs said that this bus service brought some relief since it saved time and money, though the frequency of these buses could be better. Also, the bus connectivity is limited to Kurla and Shivaji Nagar depot. The bus service is not adequate and residents continue to depend on sharing an auto rickshaw or walking back and forth and by crossing the tracks. The women pointed out that this relocated site lacks accessible and affordable public transportation and that it has caused dissatisfaction and discontent among residents. And this, in turn, has resulted in loss of jobs, especially for the women, as it increases commuting time and transport costs. Thus, their freedom, autonomy, loss of income and mobility have been severely affected. Some of the women reiterated how relocation has caused job loss, financial economic stress, mental stress, tension among family members, and loss of social network and support system. Along with these, alcoholism and a sense of hopelessness among the men had increased.

Survival of the Fittest

In 2005, when the site was new and residents were just beginning to occupy the tenements, the site lacked access to basic amenities such as proper ventilation, water, garbage disposal, utilities, electricity, and transportation. It appears that the state, the builders and the NGOs did not pay attention to the

basic standards of building codes/regulations. The residents tried to voice their frustration with the government and amongst themselves.

Ventilation, Health and Crime: The buildings are constructed too close to each other. Apart from the safety concerns this raises, most of the inner parts of the buildings do not receive adequate sunlight and fresh air. The hallways and central parts of the buildings remain dark and dingy and have become breeding grounds for both disease and petty crimes.

Poor Infrastructure and Garbage Disposal: Leakages are a permanent feature, as is water clogging during the monsoons. The buildings are not even a decade old but are deteriorating rapidly. The residents of Lallubhai Compound point to the quality of the construction material used by the builders as the prime reason for the shabby look, leaky roofs and peeling paint.[8] The water pipes, toilet pipes, and drainage pipes are much smaller (in relation to the number of the residents) often leading to congestion. These undersized pipes lead to chronic blockages and require frequent clean-ups. In addition, there is no clearance of garbage by the municipal corporation on a daily basis. Initially, in 2004-05, the Brihan Mumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) had even refused to collect garbage from this site, saying it was not under their jurisdiction and later blamed the former slum-dwellers for their "uncivilised" behaviour in throwing out garbage from the windows. Because the garbage is left in the passages between these buildings, these have become miniature dumping grounds and the sources of many ailments, particularly malaria, fever and dengue.

Health Hazards of Water Shortage and Defunct Toilets: A major problem with the site has been its design. These self-contained tenements are 225 square feet in size, with a small wall serving as a partition between the bedroom and kitchen. Provision of bath and toilet inside the tenement itself was regarded as a "plus point" by the NGO contracted to carry out the resettlement work. This perception developed because earlier most of these residents while living in slums and chawls were forced to use the public toilets or defecate in the open. However, interviews with the women residents revealed that the inhouse bathroom and toilet is of use only when there is running water. Most often due to water shortage, women have to invest more time storing water in order to keep their bathroom and toilet clean. In addition, having a kitchen and dining space within the vicinity of stinking toilets makes it worse and the women have to work doubly hard to keep the house clean.

Water: Between 2005 and 2007 the site consistently faced acute water shortage and during the summer months of 2006 and 2007, there was no water at all. In such circumstances, residents were forced to buy water from the nearby slums of Sathe Nagar and Shivaji Nagar. Although the access to water supply has improved recently (from seven minutes to 30 minutes per day), the residents vividly recall their hardships during the "water crisis". In some cases, residents even temporarily moved back to their earlier slums to deal with the situation. There are many "water intermediaries" (Contractor 2012) who sell water illegally in this area to the distressed residents. In the absence of the state-provided amenities residents of Lallubhai Compound relied on these small water sellers (who referred to it as the "golden goose"). Their expenditure on water increased substantially as they had to buy small storage tanks to store water in the house, and the women had to worry about both money and the hardship involved in collecting water. Collection and storage of water was their most important task and they remarked that the single objective of their life was "to fetch water for family, every single day and night".[9]

Voicing Frustration: The residents' access to conveniences such as ration shops, flour-mills, schools, hospitals, places of worship, community halls, graveyards and a police station was non-existent until 2007. It is only after 2007 and following several struggles and protest rallies that some improvements were made. Residents demanded daily water supply and removal of garbage, a safe approach road, a foot overbridge to Mankhurd station, and ample lights at the main street intersections, etc. The BMC and MUTP authorities have ignored this.[10] The TISS report that studied the resettlement sites of Majas (Jogeshwari), Anik (Chembur) and Lallubhai Compound (Mankhurd) accurately pointed out and underpinned this whole process of resettlement as "recycling of poverty" (MMRDA 2008). Furthermore, the report dwelt on the "failure of this process" and illustrated the daunting challenges faced by the poor residents who had to shell out more money on maintenance costs of the buildings, transportation, electricity and healthcare. This report also underscored that all resettlement sites "in common lack essential services such as affordable health services, access to Public Distribution System (PDS)" (MMRDA 2008). These common and shared struggles of the residents were clear and voiced several times, particularly by the women who had to shoulder the maximum burden of these by travelling back and forth to access the PDS and healthcare or to fetch water. The families/households that could not survive in such a challenging and hostile environment left Lallubhai Compound and migrated towards Kharghar, Panvel or back to other slums. Some of them were compelled to sell off their tenements "illegally".[11]

Causing Neighbourhood Conflicts? The "everyday life" at this resettlement site was marked by day-to-day conflicts and fights largely referred to as *"kirkiri, bachabachi or as bhandan"*. Women were entangled in such conflicts because they dealt with problems of water shortage, garbage collection, etc. These were considered as the "root causes" of everyday fights, besides their diverse social identities. A similar finding about women being involved in petty fights was reported in a study by Fernandes and Raj of a resettlement site with these quarrels being described as women's prerogative (cited in Ganguly 1996: 1501). The fights erupt because the women are forced to demarcate boundaries in cramped, overcrowded and mixed neighbourhoods. This may be motivated by other factors such

as caste, religion and other differences. However, in most cases neighbours fought with each other accusing one another of "invading their privacy" and usurping scarce resources such as water or occupying the upper floors.

Conflicts over the formation of cooperative housing societies, deciding on amount and payment of maintenance charges and electricity charges were also common. The residents living on the upper floors found the elevator services indispensable, whereas the ground floor residents did not want to pay for this facility. Gradually, the payment for elevators and common lights in the corridors became irregular and such services became defunct. The social life of the residents was marked by several frictions. There was social discord amongst the residents over "the other", those who did not belong to their own caste, religion and region. Living amidst such a diverse mixed socio-economic neighbourhood also brought several challenges, exhibiting schisms of caste, religion, region, language, etc. This is a warning to policymakers not to regard such resettlement sites from a linear point of view, but as a grid of multilayered, hierarchical struggles, based on the axis of caste, gender, religion and language.

Insecurity, Crime and Segregation

On the one hand, there is overcrowding in certain buildings where residents are tightly packed into tiny tenements, whereas on the other, there are hundreds of tenements that are still unoccupied and vacant (Boga 2012). These unoccupied buildings are breeding grounds for the formation of gangs, thefts, drug consumption by children, attacks on police and even cases of rape. This locality also faced communal conflicts that were under-reported.[12] Residents described some of the unreported crimes that took place in 2008 and 2009, involving conflicts between Hindus (lower-castes Hindus) and Muslims over religious processions. Other causes were inter-religious love affairs (referred to as *lafda*), eve-teasing and the emotional atmosphere during cricket matches played between India and Pakistan.

This resettlement site comprises a mixed group of residents belonging to diverse income and social groups. Most of them formerly lived in slums, chawls, or even on pavements and come from different parts of Mumbai.[13] Residents here continued to maintain cliques and kept a distance from those who did not belong to their own caste, religion, region or their earlier neighbourhoods. This segregation was practised across all castes, religions, and language groups despite their common struggles and proximity to each other. Furthermore, a residential hierarchy (former chawl, slum or pavement dwellers) remained clearly defined with those from the chawls looking down upon those who came from the pavements. Constant references to their earlier localities were ways to demarcate those who came from the pavements or from slums alongside the railway tracks, and were deemed as lowly, uncivil and inferior.

In conjunction with these residential hierarchies, there were other hierarchies based on social identities. The residents identified themselves as Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists (largely ex-Mahars), harijans (Tamil dalits of the Pariah caste), and Christians. The ones who identified themselves as Hindus were Yadavs, Koeri, Nadar, Khatik, Lohad, Dhor, Chambhars, Bhangi, Valmiki, Marathas and Kunbis. The Mahar members identified themselves as Bouddha/Buddhist. Caste was a constant reminder and means of demarcation. Marathas (an upper caste) and Other Backward Caste Hindus associated the problem of overcrowding with "these untouchable castes and religion".

A Maratha resident from building number 14 in an interview stated that,

> when this site was new and vacant, it was okay. Now we have this influx that brought risk, instability, you can't help if people are 'chor-chambhar' (chambhar, an untouchable caste equated as a thief) such problems of theft, security, hygiene are bound to happen.[14]

Everyday conflicts were attributed to the growing influx of dalits and Muslims. The lower-caste Hindu residents always feared the Muslim community due to Lallubhai Compound being amidst the large Muslim population of Shivaji Nagar. The perceived image of Muslims was "dangerous, aggressive and violent".[15] They referred to this suburb as "'*ha tyancha area padto*' (this area is theirs) they are in Shivaji Nagar, there are about seven masjids and we have only three Hindu temples". Amdist the Hindu-Muslim schism, dalits were perceived as troublemakers and assertive by the Hindus.

Segregated and Stigmatised Social/Community Life

In spite of sharing common struggles against the inadequate infrastructure and pathetic living conditions, there were hardly any signs of the residents coming together. They identified themselves along religious lines. Time was spent in isolation or interaction with their own kind in spite of living in frighteningly close proximity. Most of these communities/castes did not interact with each other except on very rare occasions of society meetings. There is a strong feeling of "we" among the Hindus, who consider themselves as a majority. They disassociate themselves from the "others", particularly Muslims, who also form a sizeable population at this site. The host population around Mankhurd has a sizeable Muslim population, adding to the anxieties of the Hindus living in Lallubhai Compound. Interestingly, the Marathi-speaking Hindus kept trying to forge solidarity with the other non-Marathi speaking Hindus and Buddhists, the latter referred to as "*Jai-Bhim wale*". The Buddhist population did not identify itself as Hindu and had a distinct identity. With the growing influx of Muslim and Buddhist (largely ex-Mahars) oustees, the social ratio has changed dramatically causing anguish and bitterness among those who identified themselves as Hindus. The Hindu women[16] often complained that this influx brought greater struggles over common resources such as public spaces, *chowks* (public squares) and even inside the buildings. They attributed the garbage menace as the sole creation of these "uncivilised" Jai-Bhim wale and Mussalman.

Their social and religious lives revolved mainly around their own families and neighbours belonging to their own backgrounds. Muslim women confined their social interactions to

Muslims; Hindu women remained with their own kind based on caste and language. The women's social life was restricted to within their "buildings" (read as physical boundaries). Friendships across different castes, religions and languages were rare.

Residents cultivated strong religious identities and strived to maintain social distance and distinction. One way of doing this was putting up a tile with the picture of a particular deity or religious symbol above the door. Religious festivals were celebrated with great fervour and thousands of rupees were spent on festivities. Lallubhai Compound which otherwise appeared wretched and depressing was transformed during these festivities. For instance, during Ramzan Id, green flags flew from these buildings; green coloured lights lit up the main streets and buildings and during Shivaji jayanti, Navraatri and Diwali, saffron flags and *patakas*[17] were everywhere. On Ambedkar and Buddha jayanti the place was adorned with blue flags and blue patakas. A large number of Tamilians of the Nadar and Pariah communities celebrate Pongal, but most of them preferred to go to Dharavi to celebrate these festivals with their kith and kin. These festivities were also an opportunity to register communal presence and display of power politics. Big hoardings with pictures of local and powerful politicians, activists and religious leaders were displayed at the main intersection of the site. These hoardings are also the means to exhibit their identity, politics and connections to local politicians and leaders.

It was clear that celebration of religious festivals or any other celebration had a subtext to it. Religious festivals and these celebrations were considered a "masculine" affair. Activities such as fundraising, inviting guests, finalising the budget and maintaining expenditure were handled by the men, who collected money from several political parties, political leaders, community members and several *mandals* (groups). Most often, organisers of such events are also influential men from the community with wider networks and local influence. Of late, this place too has witnessed the growth and influence of extreme politics and religious festivals. One woman respondent said on condition of anonymity,

> Residents fear that any trivial fight can turn into a big communal fight during these religious processions. It would not take time for any untoward incident to break and catalyse into a communal riot. Resident feel anxious all the time, it is an unspoken fear. It is clear why Lallubhai Compound outside is known as "dangerous" and potential ground for fermenting religious hostilities. Though things are getting better of late. Now there is a police station and matters are under control but how much can a handful of policemen do in a site with more than 9,000 people.[18]

Mandals and Caste and Class Conflicts

Apart from allocation of houses[19] and access to basic amenities there were other problems faced particularly by the low-income households and dalits. This was related to the increasing mandal[20] activities. Each building had its own housing society and welfare committees. They were further subdivided into committees to look after religious affairs, women's welfare, running nurseries for children, etc.

Aarti Kamble who was relocated with her family from Kurla said,

> *Societywallas* (members of the housing society) always behave as if everyone in Lallubhai was automatically upgraded to middle class after relocation. They should remember that we came from the slums and we don't have that much money, all our money is now being spent on electricity, transportation, water, maintenance and this *puja* or that *puja*. We have cut down on food expenditure like pulses, oil, and meat because we cannot manage so many expenses. There is always deficit and I am always borrowing money from my relatives. Our income has not increased but our expenses have, so many women lost their jobs after coming to this place. The women who manage the house know we are walking on a tightrope with no hope, we have to deal with bigger problems, now we don't know what is important expenditure, whether paying for food or electricity? Tell me, how can you manage your family under these circumstances? In addition, on top of these difficult circumstances, *societywalle* come and ask money for maintenance and this puja (Hindu religious rituals) and that *puja*! How do we pay for all of this? Where is the money?

It is therefore not surprising that many buildings in Lallubhai Compound put up noticeboards declaring "*feriwale aur chanda mangenewalo ko andar ana sakt manaa hai*" (hawkers and those collecting donations are prohibited from entering). Each family had to spend between Rs 200 and Rs 400 as maintenance cost per month. In addition, donations for religious festivities were also collected from residents varying between Rs 100 (minimum) and Rs 500. Those families with stable income and earnings above Rs 20,000 per month did not hesitate to part with money for such programmes in the beginning but for families who survived hand-to-mouth, it was extremely challenging. In order to meet expenses, the women had to depend heavily on their extended families and neighbours. This ordeal of displacement, relocation and resettlement has "unsettled" many households who are struggling to make ends meet.

Saroj,[21] a Buddhist (Mahar) woman, lived in a building populated by diverse social groups, but most were lower-caste Hindus and the Yadavs. She said,

> There are about 70 buildings and more welfare *mandali* (groups). In the past, to deal with the water crisis, some of them suggested performing *satyanarayan puja* and regardless of our belief or non-belief, we had to shell out money. Then these men and women from *mandals* would come and ask for money for Diwali, dandiya, etc., sometimes they even got health check-up camps to show it is a secular welfare activity benefiting all. Honestly, it is all about celebrating Hindu festivals. Why should we pay for Hindu festivals? How is it a welfare activity? The fact is that most of us in the building are Buddhists, and Muslims but a few minority residents dominate us. In addition, we do not like celebrating *Hinduche sann (*Hindu festivals). It is ironic that when we want to undertake activities such as inviting learned people to talk about Babasaheb Ambedkar, Jotiba Phule, or arrange lectures on importance of education, women's empowerment, our *mandal* refuses to undertake such activities, participate or fund our activities. So tell me is this not discrimination if not Hindu domination?… why should we always pay for these festivals in the name of unity and solidarity?…

This was a common experience with residents of building numbers 61 and 62. These two buildings had residents who were mainly dalits and had lived in Milind Nagar of Powai, Bhandup, and Mulund. They are relatively new to Lallubhai Compound and were relocated only in 2010. In comparison to

the others who struggled for access to water, these residents did not have to suffer over water, but had to put up with the stench stemming out of heaps of uncleared garbage and a nearby sewer. They suspected that authorities allocated them these buildings near sewer and garbage spots because they are dalits and associated them with the sewers/garbage.

Dalit Women and Their Social Life

Sanghamitra More, resident of building number 62, shared her experience with her Maratha neighbours who are a minority in the building populated mostly by Buddhists (Mahars) and Chambhars (a formerly untouchable caste associated with leather work that identifies itself as Hindu). Sanghamitra recalled that when they first moved there in 2010 from Milind Nagar (Powai), they were not happy with the new location as the site was too far from their earlier residence and lacked several civic amenities and had hostile social groups. What was really challenging for them in Lallubhai Compound was that nobody celebrated Ambedkar Jayanti and there was no common place of worship. Sanghamitra lived on the same floor as three Maratha families who had relocated two years before her. Because they were older residents and "active" members, they led most of the welfare activities. They were proactive and participated in the society meetings. They were interested in starting a *balwadi*[22] and arranged *haldi-kumkum* (Hindu festival for married women). This was to serve as a social ice-breaker and introduce new occupants of the building to the older residents. Sanghamitra remarked that this programme itself was not a problem. She recalled,

> On the first Sunday of August 2010, they kept this programme of *haldi-kumkum*. Bhosle, a resident of the fourth floor (Maratha by caste) suggested that all women from the building should have a get-together. They were aware that most of the residents in this building are from Milind Nagar and Buddhist (largely ex-Mahar). Still, most of them accepted and contributed Rs 200. Within a month's time, these women collected some Rs 18,000. Sweets, betel nuts, flowers and gift items were distributed to each s*uvasini* (married woman, whose husband is alive*)* and who came to this programme.

What triggered a conflict was the insistence on performing puja of goddesses Saraswati and Laxmi that upset many women including Sanghamitra.

She explained,

> they expected us to pray and bow to these goddesses. We said that it is good thing you have arranged this for all of us but this is not our culture or way of life to worship Hindu goddesses. Next time if you want "get-together" we would like to have photos of B R Ambedkar and Savitribai Phule.

Sanghamitra added, "*parat tya alyach nahit*" (they never came back to us).

In the following year (2011), Sanghamitra recalls,

> They did not invite anyone from the building but called other Maratha and Hindu women from the neighbouring buildings to celebrate haladkumkum. They again celebrated it on the terrace without inviting us and we also did not go thereafter. After that we do not talk to each other nor do we participate with them, in fact, they ridicule and taunt me about religious conversion and so do we about their misplaced belief in goddesses who did not contribute anything to a woman's life and empowerment. They do not know we are *kattar* (staunch) Buddhist who do not celebrate Holi, Diwali and such festivals! It is wrong of them to expect that we will mutely participate in Hindu festivals. For our jayanti, we don't go asking *vargani* (donations) and for their participation. They want to worship goddesses who did nothing for anybody but don't want Ambedkar who emancipated so many women! Wonder why? Because they think Ambedkar is of *'halykya jaticha,'* (lower caste). We don't want to be part of such humiliating and exclusive celebrations and fake unity (interview with Sanghamitra in 2012 October).

It was clear that in the name of mandal activity in buildings with a sizeable population of Buddhist women (ex-Mahars), Hindu women tried to dominate by organising pujas and festivals and undertook activities that were suitable to their way of social life.

Therefore, it was common for dalit women to speak about having a place of worship or returning to their original place of residence. Saroj, another young woman, mentioned how much she missed her social life in the Buddha Colony from where she would go to Chaityabhoomi, Dadar.[23] She mentioned how life was different in the earlier neighbourhood where familiarity of caste and kinship rendered comfort due to similar struggles and social life, which forged bonding. She preferred going back to live in Buddha Colony someday, than to experience caste discrimination while living in Lallubhai Compound, for several reasons.

She said,

> Even if access to amenities improved there will be no way that we will be able to bond with such people, who have no empathy to understand why we left Hindu religion and fail to see the caste system and this religion as problematic. Moreover, who will put up with those who keep humiliating us for being of lowly origin?

Gender Struggles and Access to Public Space

Ganguly Thukral (1996) brilliantly underscores aspects of the gender dimension in the debilitating process of development, displacement and rehabilitation. Embedded in such process are gender bias and gender struggles making women the worst-affected victim. Previous studies on resettlement sites illustrate that the burden of collection of water invariably falls on women.[24] In Lallubhai Compound, women, regardless of their caste, religion, region, etc, had to devote their time in fetching water. Studies carried out on resettlement sites worldwide have shown that most of them face acute problems of access to clean drinking water, which invariably means that women from all these resettled sites are spending most of their time and energy in collecting water (Cernea 1990).

Further, displacement is known to have differential impact on women, children, the elderly, the physically differently-abled and other such vulnerable social groups. One common feature that runs across all castes, income groups, religions, and languages is relocation and its impact on women and their livelihoods. A large number of women from building numbers 14, 17, 58, 61, and 62[25] belonging to the Maratha-Kunbi, and ex-Mahar castes raised grievances of relocation and its impact on their lives and families. About 42 women participated in these group discussions and they unanimously reported the loss of livelihood that relocation caused them. Most of these women had to give up their earlier jobs after relocation. Most of them previously worked as domestic helps in middle-income

suburbs and earned enough to manage their household expenses. Finding such jobs within the vicinity of Mankhurd was difficult, as it is a largely low-income suburb. These women were quick to point out that it is not the relocation alone but also lack of access to public transportation that resulted in forcing them to stay back at home without work. The cumulative impact of accessibility to cheap public transportation, access to basic amenities, increased cost of travel, and time needed to reach their earlier workplace, worked adversely and subsequently women were forced to quit their earlier jobs.

No Loitering or Availing of Common Facilities

In the initial phase of their resettlement, use of public space within the site was largely restricted to men, though recently it has improved considerably**.** Common property resources such as the community halls, the streets, the housing society office and playgrounds were considered "masculine" spaces and were largely controlled and accessed by the men. In the evenings, when they came back from work, they would gather around these common areas, huddle and hang around talking to other men from their building/community. Women were not meant to be seen on the streets, except for the few who sold vegetables, fish or other petty groceries. After dusk, women had no business being seen in such spaces. This site already had very limited public space for recreation and the women were confined and restricted to the small dingy tenements. There was some open space at the back of the building, but was largely accessed and controlled by young boys who played cricket or sat there idly.

As there was no provision for recreation, parks, or any such facility, each housing society/building had converted four tenements into a community hall to carry out social welfare activities. The keys of these offices remained in the custody of office-bearers, who were largely men. Therefore, even if women needed to access these community halls, they had to depend on men who would in turn hand over the keys to the women to carry out their welfare activities. Men also perceived these women's activities as futile and of no significance. After the growing resentment of dalit members who had registered their protest at these spaces being used only for religious rituals, some housing society secretaries invested funds in starting recreation facilities. At building numbers 16 and 58, the society invested in buying books, a carrom board, chess mats and badminton rackets. Mostly, men used these facilities. It is a general understanding among women that well-behaved and women of "good character" have no business to be on the streets or in any public space, but can participate in civic activities as long as it benefits the men.

Casting Restrictions

Apart from such restrictions/non-access to community resources, young girls and women from the site had to face severe restrictions on their mobility. Their access to public space and community life was curtailed deliberately. This new mixed neighbourhood comprised people of different castes and religions, thus positing different kinds of challenges. Passing crude remarks on women's bodies and eve-teasing was rampant. Each community perceived men of the other community as predators and a threat to their women. Aspects of proximity to diverse, non-homogeneous populations and largely strangers indirectly brought several restrictions on both women and particularly younger girls. This was reflected in the attitude of the concerned parents who would not allow their daughters to walk around in the neighbourhood or make friends with other men and women. Younger unmarried girls were monitored, felt insecure and complained of loss of freedom to move freely in such a neighbourhood. They were discouraged from wearing western clothes, jeans or any tight-fitting clothes. Often parents or male members of the family would ensure that they kept a check on the girls. These restrictions and regulations were framed by parents who feared that their young girls might elope and marry outside their caste and religion, and hence needed to be disciplined, controlled and put under surveillance.

During interviews and FGDs women often spoke about the fear of rape, molestation and sexual harassment. Women and girls felt their earlier slums/neighbourhoods were much safer because of the familiarity. Studies on slums show them as spaces that are based on caste, kinship, and village ties (Ayyar 2010).[26] Here, at a resettlement site, an immediate neighbour may or may not be familiar and hence posits challenges of difference, trust, bonding, etc. In addition, due to rigid caste and religious demarcation, the fear of inter-caste and inter-religious marriages is considered as a serious threat by many families. Therefore, men (fathers, brothers/uncles) had to worry for unmarried daughters/sisters in the family and ensure that she did not have any *lafda*.

While girls have to maintain modesty and dignity by wearing "decent" clothes, young boys had the freedom to wear whatever clothes they wished to and be in any part of the resettlement site at any given time. It was clear that residents particularly women/girls found they had more freedom in terms of mobility in slums than at the resettlement site. They also felt they were more secure inside their slums/ghettoes because in a slum setting no one is a stranger, the community has greater control over visitors and all of them belong to the same caste, religion and region. Rape, therefore, was considered as a threat from the outside.

Threats to young girls, minors and women remained critical and real. Two years ago an unidentified person allegedly raped a five-year-old girl, when she was playing outside her building (*Times of India* 2011). Another incident of rape was reported on 6 September 2012. A 25-year-old was accused of raping his 35-year-old aunt at her residence in Lallubhai Compound (Sudhakar 2012). These cases have only heightened the insecurities of women and girls who feel they are "trapped" in neighbourhoods that are increasingly becoming unsafe. Particularly, younger girls refuse to talk about serious and traumatic incidents of eve-teasing, passing of lewd remarks from local *tapori, tukkar* (wasted) boys. Insecurity for these young girls comes from two factors, one based on shame and disgust and the other owing to communal/caste lines. These young girls feared rape because of the growing influx from diverse social

backgrounds. Also, they feared that if eve-teasing and sexually coloured remarks were reported to family members, there would be a communally charged situation. Therefore, women/girls had to face these situations mutely.

Politics of Urban Space and NGOs

Women vendors staying in Lallubhai Compound had to struggle to access public spaces to earn their livelihood. Street vending is one of the most visible sections of the informal sector (Bhowmik 2009). It is estimated that about 2% of the total population in Mumbai make their living through street vending (Bhowmik 2009). Most of these vendors contribute to the city by subsidising merchandise to the poor and middle-income groups, yet they are harassed by the municipal and police officials who collect *hafta* (bribes) from them. Such collections are estimated to amount to Rs 400 crore annually (Bhowmik 2009).

At Lallubhai Compound, some of the women had taken to street vending post-relocation. These women who earlier worked as domestic help or sweepers in hospitals or offices were forced to take up some alternative livelihood to make ends meet. This was the only means available to them to make up for their lost income. These women sat in the shadows of buildings at the main intersection/chowk and sold vegetables, eatables and other items. In 2005, there were only 15 to 20 women involved in vending who would sit in the morning and evening during the prime hours. While they came from diverse backgrounds, most of them were Muslim or Tamil-speaking dalits.

Gradually, street vending grew into a vibrant local market within a year. Women sat there throughout the day and the better part of evening and earned between Rs 50 and Rs 100 or more on good days. Along with other male vendors who had *thelas* (carts), women vendors sat on the street selling their offerings of vegetables, eatables, fruits and daily items. The *mandi* (market) that was provided for those who had lost their shops/commercial spaces at a nearby place was too far from the site and hence most of them preferred to sit inside the compound. This was convenient for both vendors and buyers. During the peak hours, the street would get very crowded and it became an inconvenience for those with vehicles. On the other hand, women vendors exhibited their salesmanship as they were particularly attentive to the needs of other women and aided other poor residents by giving them credit and making daily items available at cheaper prices. This group of women brought relief to other women who now could shop for groceries nearby instead of going to the market near Mankhurd station, thus saving time and money. This vending in many ways revitalised the streets of Lallubhai Compound, which were otherwise deserted until the men came back from work. This was also a rare instance when women were visible in the public space. However, this activity was not tolerated for too long and was stalled by an NGO[27] and some middle-income residents from Lallubhai Compound who alleged that the bazaar was a great inconvenience to the commuters (mainly men with four-two-wheelers) and caused congestion at the main intersection.

According to the women vendors who confronted the NGO, the latter were acting upon guidelines issued by MUTP officials and to favour the middle-income residents. They pointed out that the MUTP and the *sahib lok* (authorities) perceived these activities as uncivil, "unsuited" for a resettlement site like Lallubhai Compound, particularly during a time when World Bank officials were going to make a visit.[28]

All these sections – the middle-income residents, the NGO members and the authorities failed to see this as an activity that benefited both, the vendors and the buyers, and successfully evicted them from the streets and pushed them into the mandi, located at a distance. Though the women vendors come back to sell on the street, they have to face evictions routinely. The NGO staff threatened them with police and municipal raids. Thus, this NGO and like-minded groups who were more concerned about the physical appearance of the site or proper usage of roads and pavements, successfully evicted these vendors. Such struggles to earn and live in a hostile environment had become part of an everyday struggle for majority of the residents, particularly for the women.

NGOs and Perceptions of Dalit Women

Factions within the residents of Lallubhai Compound were a result of the degree of closeness and access that certain households/individuals had to influential individuals in the NGOs and within the civic authorities. The residents of a building with predominantly Buddhist population (Mahar) had a Yadav woman named Sandhya Rani Kumari as the secretary of their cooperative society. She was regarded as "influential" because she was considered to be close to the NGO mentioned above and a few of the residents even referred to her as a spy for the NGO. She mainly handled resettlement issues, formation of housing societies, settling of grievances and so on, but also controlled many other aspects. For instance, many researchers from different parts of the world came to study this resettlement site. Kumari, acting on a tip from the NGO, would take these researchers around in those buildings where the residents were allied with the NGO. Obviously, this put her in control of the information going to the researchers and to influence it to favour the NGO and the resettlement process.

It was evident that large numbers of dalit women who formed a sizeable majority in buildings 53, 61, 62, 63,[29] were least represented in the housing society committees appointed by this NGO. The chairman or treasurers of the cooperative housing society would often be close to this NGO and its staff. Where representation of women was needed, Yadav and Nadar women known be "active", "responsible" and "cooperative" were taken on. A handful of dalit men were also part of these housing committees due to the compulsions of showing diverse representation, but the presence of dalit women was very low. Similarly, Muslim women's presence in such committees was remarkably low. Nonetheless, Muslim women in many other ways maintained close relations with the NGO and its allied members.

Out of the well-known groups operating in Lallubhai Compound, MM was one of the largest grass-roots networks of women and worked on several fronts assisting post-resettlement activities. MM had already made a base and worked towards

building the capacity of women to encourage small savings on a daily basis. Through this form of making these women save and gain access to credit, MM had dwarfed all other indigenous and informal forms of micro-saving activities such as *bhishis,* a small, closed informal saving group, formed by women and known for flexibility and cooperation amongst its members.

Issues of Exclusion

Dalit women perceived this NGO, MM and its alliances as exclusive. Though overtly it appeared that this NGO and its alliances were inclusive, in reality the Nadar, Yadav and Muslim community dominated them. The large presence of the Nadar, Yadav and Muslim women isolated the Marathi-speaking women who felt uncomfortable by the presence of both Muslim and Nadar women (who they referred to as kith and kin of the NGO staff and as "Madrasis"). This experience of exclusion of Marathi-speaking women saw the return of bhishis, which they found far more reliable and flexible.

Women like Vishakha Kamble from building number 52 formed their own group from the building. The local MM staff accused Vishakha of fragmenting the neighbourhood. Vishakha pointed out that, "it is easy to point fingers at Jai-Bhim wale women but no one would dare to allege or ask Maratha women or others about such a thing".[30] She also said that she, along with the women from her building and community, had reluctantly discontinued their activities with the established groups such as MM because of multiple reasons.

Women in leadership roles in the committees or elsewhere largely belonged to the Nadar community. Most of the time women from Vishakha's building were not invited for meetings, or they were treated as "numbers" and their participation was merely ornamental. Even if they were invited, accurate information on the agenda and venue of the meeting was shared only at the last minute and often the venue was changed without any prior information. This, according to Vishakha and other ex-Mahar women, was often a deliberate yet indirect way of excluding them. In addition, the cooperative societies, which were formed under the influence of the NGO, controlled access to office space, documents and resources, and opportunities of decision-making were available to the influential Nadar, Yadav and Muslim women who were known to this NGO.

Interestingly, this resentment and opinion about MM and the NGO was not shared equally by all lower-caste Marathi-speaking women. Sarika Jadhav who lived in building number 62 was a staunch supporter of MM and the NGO. She believed that saving money was more important and critical than power politics and issues of representation and preferred not to discuss and focus on the problems with MM and the NGO's activities. According to Jadhav, she had been with MM for almost six years, right from her transit camp days to her relocation in Lallubhai Compound. She said,

> The core group of this NGO or for that matter MM was mainly run by the kith and kin of AJ's (one of the leading figures in the NGO) people. There was a large presence of Muslim women too, but they had old ties, hence they were given importance. The site is witnessing the influx of new population, Hindi-speaking migrants from Uttar Pradesh, namely, Yadav, Koeris and Balmikis. In this neighbourhood everyone looks down on pavement dwellers and Balmiki women. They are actually not sweepers but toilet cleaners, so you see MM and others women were initially reluctant to take these women. You know these Yadav men would openly call the Balmiki women "Bhangis" and were not in favor of including them in any initiatives. This had put MM in a difficult situation… but we managed, made everybody happy, all are welcome in our group but should remain within their boundaries…

Sarika also highlighted how it was "stupidity" of the Jai-Bhim wale women who left the group. She stated,

> It is true that there are issues of representation and leadership and this brought decline of membership from Marathi speaking communities, particularly the lower (untouchable) castes such as the Mahars, Balmikis, etc. But these women are naïve, they should have saved their money with the organisation and forgotten about democracy, participation, transparency, power, position, leadership, meetings, those Nadar women are not going to give them anything.

Jadhav also pointed out that although saving is incredibly popular, there have been many complaints and issues connected with this activity. This was more so in the case of loan applications from the members. Women members often complained that MM was very slow in responding to approving loans. Furthermore, the power of granting crisis loans was given to the "leader" who was often from the Muslim or Nadar community who were biased against applicants from other groups. Such instances were responsible for alienating a large number of members who started doubting the system and gradually dissociated themselves from MM and their activities.

Ironically, this NGO and its alliances are known for their grass-roots participation. Arjun Appadurai (2001: 23) acclaimed anthropologist popularised them as "instruments of deep democracy". He demonstrated that these organisations although rooted in "local contexts are truly global and redefined governance and urban governmentality" (ibid).

Residents of the Buddha Colony, Kurla who were resettled in Lallubhai Compound recalled the presence of this NGO's members with the demolition squad that razed their homes. For these residents it was difficult to digest and understand this nexus of the NGO, and its role in their demolition and later in the resettlement. They held that this NGO was not only "co-opted", but was also an oppressor given its involvement in evictions, displacement at Kurla and action against the women vendors. Some of them even regarded the World Bank as more sympathetic for initiating an inspection panel to hear their grievances, unlike the MMRDA and this NGO.

It may be extremely important to recall a similar experience, a case study done on Dharavi where this NGO was in conflict with the lower-caste Padamshali community. Mukhija (2003), in his critical study on the Markandeya Housing Society, unravelled these conflicts in which the Padamshalis accused this NGO of being "co-opted" by the state, exposing the schism within several local communities which this NGO claimed to represent.

Hitherto, this NGO and its alliances were known for its "politics of accommodation, negotiation, and long-term pressures rather than of confrontation or threats of political reprisal" (Appadurai 2001: 33). This strategy of using accommodation,

co-option and compliance with the state reveals why the NGO must have not been able to go against the state who was the prime executor of this badly-implemented resettlement. In addition, NGOs when entrusted with responsibilities and power to resettle and rehabilitate displaced populations under state-led development may produce greater vulnerabilities. Issues over identity, representation and the declining role of the state are bigger threats and concerns than so-called participation from below, which continues to marginalise the historically marginalised women. In a socially stratified country like India, these micro processes offer insights on understanding the gender and caste question and emerging patterns of "civic governmentality" as highly "depoliticising" (Harris 2001) and exclusive.

Conclusions

This study offers a microscopic insight into a peripheral and neglected resettlement site of Mumbai, a socio-spatial periphery created by larger violent processes of neo-liberal cities. These processes unfolding in Indian cities are underscored as "brutal and primitive violence" (Roy 2009: 177). In such capitalist processes, struggles of communities belonging to historically marginalised social groups complicate the outcomes and experiences in such "wars" (ibid: 177). It will be myopic to view these complex processes and their impact from a linear perspective. Several hierarchies of caste and religion mark gender struggles. This paper underlines the finer aspects of the socio-cultural milieu of "everyday life" and how intersections of caste, gender, religion and language play a pivotal role in creating several hierarchies and the everyday construction of "others", leading to several forms of barriers, conflicts, forms of inclusion/exclusion and communalisation.

This paper also foregrounds displacement and its impact particularly on women, in the form of loss of livelihood, which is almost synonymous with compulsory displacement/resettlement. Struggles to collect water from sources both legal and illegal remain a gender struggle. Complexities of caste, gender and religion interact to produce deeper and complex experiences, and add several dimensions to the vulnerabilities, particularly for those from marginal social locations. Specific experiences of dalit women in this mixed neighbourhood indicate schism and division within the Hindu fold of the population. The lives of these dalit women is marked by experiencing and negotiating discrimination, humiliation and exclusion in such a distressed neighbourhood that endlessly produces a multitude of hierarchies both vertical and horizontal and suggest these struggles are ongoing in megacities. Hitherto, such struggles were understood along class/communal lines. This approach leaves out the finer aspects of caste, identity, hierarchy, domination, discrimination, controlling of resources, co-creating vulnerabilities for others and the role of pushing women to be the prime carriers of maintaining these divisions and hierarchies. The role of NGOs in urban governance has become significant. Though the finding of this study regards such NGOs as mediators of the state and brokers/links between the state and the people, such contracted NGOs may seriously jeopardise citizenship. Nor can they be a substitute for the state even though the state may itself neglect its responsibilities. Therefore, there is a need to understand the role of such NGOs from a critical perspective, considering the experiences of women and dalit women in particular. Their helplessness and powerlessness in such processes are marked by exclusion and state neglect.

Lastly, as part of a larger process unfolding in the cities that is deemed as violent, such a mixed resettlement site offers complex readings from several vantage points and simultaneous interactions between caste, gender and religion. Gender struggles in an emerging resettlement site, their challenges,

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the compromised and limited community life, additional burdens on women, moral policing and control over women and girls in such neighbourhoods, etc, are marked as gender-specific struggles. This site warns us of latent caste and communal conflicts that may erupt in vulnerable situations. In the past, slums were regarded as productive spaces, underbellies of the city and tucked into the intestines of Mumbai, constructing the communal "other", whereas such resettlement sites have become latent spaces of immense struggle, exclusions and are treated as the anus of the city, peripheral, neglected, while its residents are deemed to be a burden and worthless to the city. Evidently, caste, gender and religion not only continue to play a role and shape experiences, but also lead to making women vulnerable in several ways.

NOTES

1 Scheduled castes are largely untouchable castes enlisted as a constitutional category and entitled to special provisions under the Constitution. They are largely referred to as dalits, a Marxian concept coined first by a literary group belonging to the untouchable castes in 1952, later popularised by the Dalit Panthers in the 1970s.

2 During this fieldwork, I explored general aspects of resettlement, relocation and its impact on dalit women in specific. The brief visits helped to examine the long-term impact of resettlement, experiences of dalit women in a mixed neighbourhood, and survival strategies adopted by residents at the site to adapt to the new and challenging environment.

3 Host communities are those local communities among which the displaced people are settled.

4 This is an impression of the residents of Lallubhai Compound and MUTP officials who estimated that most of the displaced population at Lallubhai Compound was from the Santa Cruz-Chembur Link Road. They are largely scheduled castes/dalits and Muslims.

5 Interviews and observations conducted at Transit Camp.

6 Most of the seven-storied buildings in Lallubhai Compound have about 216 tenements, though a report of the UDRI estimated that the site could hold up to 35,000 (Gupte 2009: 310-11).

7 Emphasis mine.

8 A team of architects, students and documentarians had visited the site, I had accompanied them and took them to most of these buildings in sector A, B and C, and the nearby slum of Sathe Nagar.

9 Interviews with women residents from building Nos 53, 56.

10 Meetings conducted with several residents from across the buildings put forth these as essential and basic demands. MUTP/BMC have ignored these demands consistently.

11 Sale of tenement is not permitted within 10 years from their date of occupancy by the state authority.

12 There have been a series of communal conflicts, particularly between Hindus and Muslims. There were tense moments during cricket matches and later during Muhharram processions.

13 These residents were slum-dwellers and lived in Dadar, Sion, Kurla, Matunga, Byculla, Dharavi, VT, Mahim, GTB, Chembur, Tilak Road, Powai, Bhandup, etc.

14 Fieldwork notes taken in September 2012.

15 Fieldwork conducted among the lower-caste Hindu residents who often described their fear of living at this site, which is amidst a Muslim locality.

16 Interviews were conducted with women from building number 14, who were mostly Marathas.

17 Patakas are decorative craft papers cut in triangular shape and used for decoration.

18 Interviews conducted with women from building nos 14, 17, 58 and 59.

19 Due to non-functioning of elevators and other reasons, conflicts over allotment of houses is a common complaint from those who live on upper floors as they have to climb up/down the stairs for all their necessities. It is often a reason for day-to-day conflicts.

20 Mandals are self-financed welfare groups. They mostly run programmes to benefit members. There were hundreds of welfare groups in this resettlement site.

21 Saroj is an active member of the Buddhist Society of India.

22 Door-step school, for preparing children in the age group of 3-6 years for schooling.

23 Last rites of Babasaheb Ambedkar were performed at Chaityabhoomi, Mumbai in Dadar and to commemorate this day (Mahanirvana), millions of his followers visit each year on 6 December and also on 14 April for his birth anniversary.

24 See Fernandes and Raj (1992).

25 Key informants resided in these buildings and they facilitated focused group discussions with women from these buildings.

26 My doctoral thesis has examined the role of such social networks in formation of slums in areas of Kurla, Buddha Colony, Milind Nagar, Santa Cruz and Sathe Nagar, Mankhurd.

27 This NGO was contracted by MMRDA, who apparently was delegated the important task of resettlement and rehabilitation of projects under MMRDA. The inspection panel visited Mumbai in 2006 attributed the failure and "shortcomings" of the resettlement project mainly to the MMRDA and the contracted NGO (The Inspection Panel, 21 December 2005).

28 This official visit of the World Bank officials was expected in 2007.

29 Since the objective of the research was to record the nuanced voices of dalit women, I interviewed women from these buildings dominated by Buddhist (Mahar).

30 Personal interview conducted at building number 52.

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